

MEXICO/this month December

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# Preview

## WHAT TO SEE, WHERE TO GO IN DECEMBER

### FIESTAS & SPECTACLES

San Luis Potosí, S. L. P., Dec. 1-15. Celebration marking the close of the school year at the San Luis Potosí Institute of Fine Arts. Exhibitions and other cultural events of importance and interest.

La Paz, Baja California, Dec. 3. Fiesta honoring the town's patron saint, St. Francis Xavier.



#### IN THIS ISSUE

You do your Christmas shopping in Mexico's new market places, make your own piñata, celebrate the Noche de Rábanos in Oaxaca...

and  
Our Regular Features

#### MEXICO/ this month

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Mérida, Yucatán, Dec. 4-12. Fiesta *Guadalupana* in the San Cristóbal section of the city, where the temple dedicated to the Virgin of Guadalupe is located. The pilgrims who come in large numbers to pay homage to the Virgin later enjoy carnival attractions set up in the park facing the church.

Fresnillo, Zacatecas, Dec. 11-25. Here Christmas festivities and those honoring the Virgin of Guadalupe are combined in a fiesta lasting almost two weeks, with serenades at the doors of the church, *Las Mañanitas*, and the *posadas*, which are enthusiastically celebrated.

Guanajuato, Gto., Dec. 16-24. Here, in the heart of the gold and silver mining country, and heart, as well, of the Independence movement, Christmas is observed in the classic Mexican manner, and the *posadas* preserve their popular and folkloric aspect.

San Miguel de Allende, Gto., Dec. 16-24. One of the oldest Spanish towns in Mexico, founded in 1542 by Fray Juan de San Miguel, and of particular interest because of its colonial architecture, San Miguel de Allende is a perfect setting for the *posadas*. The Christmas festivities are crowned by the presentation of *Los Nacimientos* and the *Pastorelas* — theatrical enactment of the Biblical Christmas story.

### OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Until Saturday 15 — Book Fair, at La Ciudadela, Balderas and Enrico Martínez.

Until Saturday 15 — Mexican Ballet Season. Palace of Fine Arts.

Tuesday 4 to Thursday 6 — Christmas Flower Show presented by Mexico City Garden Club and Flower Arrangement Club; Salón de los Candiles, Hotel del Prado. Mrs. María I. de Ruiz Cortines, Mexico's First Lady, will inaugurate the show. Tickets at American Book Store, Madero 25.

Friday 8 to Wednesday 12 — Guadalupe Bullfight Festival. (See Bullfights).

Wednesday 12 — Day of the Virgin of Guadalupe, one of the biggest days of the year in Mexico, and particularly in the capital, with processions to the Basilica of Guadalupe. (See Fiestas & Spectacles).



Saturday 15 to Sunday 30 — V Agricultural, Livestock, Commercial and Tourist Fair of the State of Morelos. In Cuernavaca.

Sunday 16 to Monday 24 — The Christmas Season in all of Mexico opens with nine days of *posadas*, traditional parties which recall the Holy Family's journey to Bethlehem.

Sunday 23 — Festival of the Radishes in Oaxaca. (See Fiestas & Spectacles).

Friday 28 — *Día de los Inocentes*, Mexico's equivalent of April Fool's Day, with the same sort of pranks.

Celaya, Gto., Dec. 16-24. The *posadas*, in which all the townspeople take part, are climaxed with a parade of allegorical carts representing Biblical passages, on which the young girls of the city ride. Folkloric dances include *El Plumero* and *La Sonaja*.

Querétaro, Qro., Dec. 16-24. The nine days of *posadas* are carried out with special splendor and significance in this state capital. Festivities culminate on Christmas Eve with the famed parade of allegorical floats of Biblical inspiration.

Oaxaca, Oax., Dec. 18, 23 and 24. Homage is made, on Dec. 18, to the Virgin of La Soledad, patron saint of the city. The unique *Noche de Rábanos* (see page 11) is celebrated on Dec. 23, when booths line the four sides of the Jardín de la Constitución, where radishes of extraordinary size and strange shapes are displayed. On Christmas Eve, the residents of the various sections of the city organize *Calendas*, night parades in which the participants carry small lighted lanterns and sacred images. The image of the

Child Jesus accompanies them in a cart splendidly lighted and adorned. At 11 pm, the *Calendas* meet in the Jardín de la Constitución, and from there go to their respective churches for Midnight Mass.

## ART

Galería Antonio Souza, Génova 61-2. Beginning Dec. 6, works of Gunther Gerzo.

Galería Carmel-Arts (Restaurant Carmel), Génova 70-A. Exhibit of pen-and-ink sketches of miners by Rafael Doniz continues. Mariano Paredes' engravings may be shown later in the month.

Galería Central de Arte Moderno, Av. Juárez 4. Permanent collective exhibition of canvases by Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros, Tamayo, Covarrubias, Charlot, Gustavo Montoya; watercolors by Ignacio Beteta.

Galería de Arte Contemporáneo, Ambores 12. Christmas sale. Collective exhibit of Xochitlotzin, Escamilla, Guerrero Galván, Zalce, Trinidad Osorio, Lucinda Urrusti and others.

Galería de Arte Mexicano, Milán 18. 24 oils by Japanese painter Keshio Murata.

Galería de Artes Plásticas de la Ciudad, pergola in the Central Alameda. 90 oils by Gilberto Chávez.

Galería de Artistas Unidos, S. A., Londres 87, upstairs. Collective exhibition by members, including Xavier Guerrero, Chávez Morado, Siqueiros, Rosendo Soto. Monthly auction of paintings and lithographs.

Galería José Clemente Orozco, Peralvillo 55. Children's art.

Galería Diego Rivera, Ignacio Mariscal 70. Permanent showing of the works of Diego Rivera, and presentation of his latest drawings, watercolors and oils.

Galería Pemex, Av. Juárez 89. Posters from Poland.

Galería Proteo, Génova 34. Latest works of Mexican artist Vlady, including 30 oils and some black and white engravings.

Galería Romano, José María Marroqui 5. Second Winter Salon. Collective exhibition.

Galerías Chapultepec, to one side of the Monument to the Niños Héroes at the entrance to Chapultepec Park. Works from the State Schools of Plastic Arts, dependencies of the National Institute of Fine Arts.

Galerías Excelsior, Reforma 18. Paintings by José Luis Cuevas.

Instituto de Arte de México, Puebla 141. Color engravings by the Mexican Engravers' Society.

Museo Nacional de Artes e Industrias Populares, Av. Juárez 44. Permanent exhibit of applied popular arts.

Museo Nacional de Artes Plásticas, in the Palace of Fine Arts. Sala de Arte Popular, Czechoslovakian popular art; Sala de la Amistad Internacional, color reproductions of the works of German masters, and books and engravings by the Ger-



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MEXICO CITY

man artist Werner Klemke; in the lobbies and hallways, permanent exhibition of the murals of Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tamayo.

#### Salón de la Plástica Mexicana, Puebla 154.

Paintings by Carlos Orozco Romero, Raúl Anguiano, Jorge González Camarena and Jesús Guerrero Galván.

## MUSIC

**Symphony Concerts** — Official winter season of the National Symphonic Orchestra, in the Palace of Fine Arts. Dec. 2, 11:15 am, works of Hindemith, Poulenc and Tchaikovsky, with soloists Héctor and Alicia Monfort. Bruno Vondenhoff, guest conductor.

Dec. 7 at 9 pm, and Dec. 9 at 11:15 am, works of Haydn, Ravel, Revueltas and Brahms. Victor Tevah, guest conductor.

Dec. 14 at 9 pm, and Dec. 16 at 11:15 am, works of Mozart, Laló, Leng and Stravinsky, with soloist Franco Ferrari. Victor Tevah, guest conductor.

**Ballet** — The official ballet season of the Academy of Mexican Dance, a dependency of the National Institute of Fine Arts, continues to Dec. 16, with the Mexican, National and Contemporary Ballet groups taking part. Performances at 9 pm on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. See newspapers for daily programs.

**Popular Concerts** — In the Auditorium of the VII Book Fair, Ciudadela Park, every day until Dec. 15, from 5 to 10 pm. Band contests, and programs by various orchestral groups.

## THEATER

**Los Novios** — Spanish version of Sandy Wilson's *The Boy Friend*. Produced by René Anselmo and Luis Palmer, who also directs. Musical comedy with André Toffel, Lilia Guizar. Teatro del Música, Plaza de la República and Vallarta. Weekdays 7:15 and 9:45 pm, Sundays 5 and 8 pm.

**Theater Festival** — during the Book Fair, Ciudadela Park. Daily theater presentations beginning at 5 pm in the Teatro de la Feria, by professional

companies, experimental groups in Popular Theater of the National Institute of Fine Arts, and some theatrical groups from various states of the Republic. In the Fair Auditorium, amateur groups of the INBA Popular Theater.

**Del Sótano al Cielo** — Francis Swann's 3-act comedy, *Out of the Frying Pan*, translated to Spanish by Rosa Furman. Directed by Jorge Landeta and Raúl Cardona, with the comic actors and dancers Corona and Arau, as well as Otilia Larrañaga, Humberto Almazán and Aurora Molina. Teatro de la Comedia, Villalongín 32. 35-63-00. Weekdays 7:15 and 9:45 pm; Fridays 6 and 9:45 pm; Sundays 5 and 8 pm.

## HORSES

**Racing** — Hipódromo de las Américas, Lomas de Sotelo, D. F. Races every Thursday, Saturday and Sunday at 2 pm.

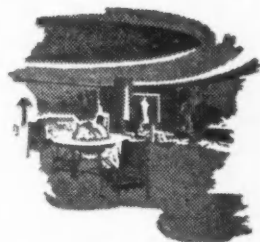
**Charros** — Practice sessions of the charros in full dress are open to the public, free of charge, at 11 am every Sunday, in any one of the following ranches:

Rancho La Tapatía, on Calzada del Molino del Rey.

Rancho Grande de La Villa, at the foot of Los Indios Verdes, entrance from the Laredo highway.

Rancho del Hormiguero. Calzada Azcapotzalco-La Villa.

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Polo — Campo Anáhuac, Paseo de la Reforma. Handicap Championship. Games every Sunday at 12 noon.

## BULLFIGHTS

Plaza El Toreo, on Calzada Cuatro Caminos. On six successive days, Dec. 7-12, inclusive, during the First Guadalupe Bullfight Festival, the outstanding matadors of today will compete for the *Rosa de Oro Guadalupeana* (Golden Rose of Guadalupe) trophy instituted in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe. The proceeds from this unique benefit fiesta will be used to pay for new construction at the Basilica.

The renown of the bullfighters, the prestige of the breeders, and the unprecedented 6-day fiesta *taurina* in combination assure a full house for every program. It is advisable, therefore, to buy tickets in advance at Isabel la Católica 45-609. Admission: shade, from 6 to 36 pesos; sun, from 4 to 24 pesos.

Plaza México, Av. Insurgentes. The professional season is on, with fights every Sunday at 4 pm. Tickets can be purchased ahead of time at the downtown box office, José María Izazaga 23.

## SPORTS

Boxing — Arena México, Dr. Lavista 181-A. Mexico's two best-known boxers, World's Bantamweight Champion *Ratón* Macías and Featherweight *El Pájaro* Moreno, are both scheduled for bouts in December. Definite dates will be announced later.

Arena Coliseo, Perú 77. Golden Gloves Championship finals during the first week in December. Fights

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on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday at 8:30 pm. Professional matches on Wednesday and Saturday at 9 pm, until Dec 15, when the season ends.

Frontón — In Frontón México, on the Plaza de la República, across from the Monument to the Revolution, the spectacular game of Jai Alai is played with baskets by Spanish experts. Every day, except Monday, beginning at 6 pm. Admission: 5 and 10 pesos.

Ice Skating — Arena México, Dr. Lavista 181A. Open to the public daily from 10 am to 10 pm. Admission: 5 pesos per hour if the management furnishes the skates; 4 pesos per hour if you bring your own.

It is possible that, during December, there will be Ice Hockey matches in the Arena, between the four Mexico City teams now organized. These events will be announced in the press.

Soccer — Olympic Stadium in the Ciudad de los Deportes, Av. Insurgentes. 1956-57 Class A Championship. Games scheduled:

Dec. 2, América v. Guadalajara  
 Dec. 9, Atlante v. Cuautla  
 Dec. 16, Necaxa v. Oro

All games at 12 noon. Tickets at the Federación Mexicana de Fútbol, Abraham González 74, or at the Stadium box office one hour before game time.

Tennis — National Doubles Championship games — men, women and mixed — will be played during the

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first week in December, at the Chapultepec Sports Club on Paseo de la Reforma, and at the Reforma Club in the Lomas de Chapultepec, at 2 pm. See newspapers for details.

**Water Skiing** — in Acapulco. International Ski Championship with Mex-

ican and U.S. skiers competing. Sometime during the first week in December, and probably on the 7th and 8th.

**Wrestling** — Arena Coliseo, Perú 77. Fridays at 8:30 pm, and Sundays at 5 pm.

## OF SPECIAL INTEREST - IN COMING MONTHS

**Chalma Festival** — The image of the Christ of Chalma is believed to have miraculous powers. For that reason, thousands make the pilgrimage to Chalma, State of Mexico each year, January 1-7.

**Day of the Kings** — on January 6, marks the end of Christmas festivities. This is the day for giving gifts to children; for that reason, markets, stores and streets overflow with toys, most of them taking the form of Mexican popular art.

**Automobile Show** — At the National Auditorium in January, the International Automobile, Motorcycle and Bicycle Show.

**January 17** — Day set aside to honor San Antonio de Padua, patron saint of domestic animals. Blessing of the animals in all churches.

**Italian Industrial Fair** — At the National Auditorium in February.

**February 2** — Día de la Candelaria, on which all those who encountered a doll in their serving of *Rosca de Reyes* on January 6, Day of the Kings, are supposed to give a fiesta for the guests present on the first occasion.

**Constitution Day** — on February 5, commemorating the promulgation of the Constitution of 1857, which embodied the liberal reforms championed by Benito Juárez, as well as the Constitution of 1917, product of the Revolution of 1910.

**Mardi Gras** — Carnival in many cities of the Republic from February 28 to March 5. Among the most important are Veracruz, Mazatlán, Monterrey, Huejotzingo, Jalapa, Tampico, Tepoztlán.



## December Suitcase

December brings on the height of the season of contrasts in Mexico: clear days flooded with sunshine, dry cold nights pinpointed with stars and crisped with frost. There's a contrast in dress that matches the weather, for this is not only the important month for formal wear and elegant evening dress, but also the peak of the resort season at tropical beaches.

If you plan a trip to Mexico this month, or during the next two or three months, this is the time to buy those cottons that look so unreal in winter-shrouded northern department stores. They'll be fine for resort wear in Mexico's winter, and be ready for a head start on summer fashions a few months from now at home.

But limit gay cottons to just one side of your suitcase. December in Mexico is a fun month — fun for parties and shopping, brightly (and dryly) fun for sightseeing, and equally fun for dressing up to go dining and dancing. Such new hotels as the Alffer and the Continental Hilton will be opening luxurious supper clubs and night clubs for the winter season, to compete with already established and long-popular clubs in other important hotels in the capital. Sleek cocktail dresses, long gloves and some glitter are important items in a woman's suitcase; a man's should include, if not a tuxedo, at least a dark suit. A topcoat is important, and furs are very much on the capital scene — though you may prefer to buy these in Mexico City, at no-tax savings.

The dry air and hot sun of the seaside resorts can damage your skin. Plan to tan, but be sure to tuck generous amounts of creams and lotions in your suitcase. Dark glasses are sightsavers, for both the high central land and tropical beaches.

If you are looking forward to Christmas visits with friends in Mexico and wonder about gifts, even a modest suitcase should have room for crush-proof synthetics. Stretch nylons and fine lingerie in nylon or other new fabrics are limited in this country. And the hollow these leave in your homebound suitcase will make a good place to begin packing the silver, leather and other local specialties you won't be able to go home without.



The monogram has held our attention year after year, in good times and bad. We have been particularly interested in watching its career in male haberdashery. Counting from the skin out, monograms are worn on men's shorts, pyjamas, and dressing robes. And all sons of good name are given monogrammed handkerchiefs as soon as they are able to use them, although these are supposed to be best kept in the trousers pockets, or at worst tucked in the cuff of the sleeve. Now, there is a body of American adult males who wear a handkerchief square in their jacket's breast pocket showing a monogram with filigree embroidery all along the hem.

But, we think, it is on the shirt that the monogram has behaved best of all. It started out conspicuously on the left breast, then moved to a less ostentatious place on the left sleeve. Finally, rising to the height of inconspicuous waste, it appears on the inside of the collar band, justifying itself as a laundry mark. *Cherchez l'homme*.

Mexico is one of the countries where native religious paintings and ornamental church art can still be found for sale. A few years ago while browsing in a junk shop we found a relic in the approximate shape of a cross, set on a base from which glued cherubic heads emerged. The piece was heavily covered with crusted gilt and aluminum paint, so we assumed that it was merely a primitive piece badly refurbished, from a poor parish.

A few days ago, inspired by the approaching Christmas season, we remembered the old cross and pulled it out of our closet. We sat with it in our patio and began to chip away the heavy caking of paint. Like a revelation intricate carving began to appear, a stylized sun on one side of the base, a moon on the other, with carved flares at the ends of the transom and the top of the upright, and a fluted sunburst at the intersection. And under the layers of paint and gesso was the original layer, fairly intact, of gold leaf. We had uncovered a masterpiece, once carried as a standard. Happy in our discovery, we wish a happy Christmas to all.

August

## Letters

### BOUQUETS

...After a perusal of the October issue of MTM I've decided my name must be added to the subscription list. Only a short time ago I returned from a trip to Mexico and, now, I find that the articles on Pátzcuaro and Uruapan certainly have added fuel to the fire! I can hardly wait for my first copy of MTM so that it will help me mark time until I get back. Enclosed you will find my check for two years' subscription.

Marie Gramling  
Tyler, Texas

...Let me compliment you upon your beautiful covers, which I am planning to use as a frieze.

Grace Osier  
Port Blakely, Wash.

...We have found your magazine to be a most trustworthy guide during our all-too-short trips to Mexico, and don't want to chance missing any future copies.

Ursula Berrard  
New Orleans, La.

### SALUDOS

...The Board of the Congressional Library is pleased to request that you furnish us with a complete file of your magazine for our archives.

J. Vázquez, Director  
Biblioteca del Poder Legislativo  
Montevideo, Uruguay

### GUANAJUATO

...I would be most grateful to you if you could find a spot in your December issue to mention my little book about the city of Guanajuato which is to be presented at the Book Fair this November and December in Mexico City. It is being brought out by the State of Guanajuato and the proceeds of its sale are to be donated to a tuberculosis clinic which is being organized under Governor Gaona.

It is a very short book, only about 100 pages, and will be published in Spanish. The title is *Guanajuato, una Ciudad Alucinante*. It is not a guide book, but an account of the early history of the city, from pre-conquest days up to the early part of the 20th century. However, references are made here and there to buildings and churches which are still in use. The booklet will be illustrated by black and white reproductions of watercolors of Guanajuato painted by my husband, Stanford Stevens, whose work is widely known in Mexico.

We had a home in Guanajuato from 1949 until 1956, when we moved to our present address. Because there was virtually nothing dealing with the history of the city in print when we went there, and because it interested me so much, I began a translation of *Efemérides Guanajuatenses*, by Father Lucio Marmolejo, which I later used as the main source of information for my little book about the city and its people.

Dorcy Cole Stevens  
Manuel Mateos 5  
Tequisquiapan, Querétaro

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# person to person



Sitting at our typewriter trying to work ourselves into the gay and happy glow required for a Christmas issue, this being early November, and not even the first piñatas of the season out, we keep thinking of some fanciful Texans we met on a recent trip. Very much in a glow, they told us about a cemetery that they swear exists in Abilene, where there is Muzak, installed and piped into every grave.

It brought up a lot of questions that will probably never be answered. For instance, who chooses the music and according to what intent? Soothing? Inspiring? Cheerful? Do they pipe Elvis in along with Bach? And, is there any break for a commercial?



In this issue, we've gone to town on Mexican markets, providing you with a map of Mexico City market-wise, and spotting the happier hunting grounds for shoppers out buying things other than meat and potatoes.

Selling and buying is one of the great national pastimes, and has been



from, as they call it, time immemorial. Back in the days of the Aztec Emperor merchants made a habit of travel-

ing far and wide, and had extra functions, such as spying out the land for the military arm, and also, acting as diplomats. They were a very powerful, highly respected secret society, whose G.H.Q. was the great market of Tlaltelolco. You see them pictured in the old books carrying their insignia, a traveler's staff, and looking always very venerable; and shrewd.

Everybody in rural Mexico makes a practice of going to market, taking anything from a basketful of limes to the product of the family kiln or barnyard. The classic formula for disposing of produce, in such parts, is "Three cents a piece, three for a dime." Naturally. The point is to make the stock last throughout the day, thus enjoying every hour of it.

If you have time enough to do a leisurely job of shopping in whatever market, you'll see the point. What goes on here is a whole way of life, combining the enjoyments of an old-time country fair with the day-to-day pleasures of participating cozily in a lot of other people's business.

Even bargaining, which is part of market etiquette, is less an exercise in mercantile talent than just talk, as a rule with a lot of philosophical considerations thrown in. It is more interesting for the merchant to have a customer who wants to bargain. At the end of the transaction, if it was carried on right, both feel very satisfied with themselves, and the mental workout.

An old friend of MTM, Bill Simpson, made his Mexico City art debut at the Galería Metropolitana last month. Simpson was our first staff artist and art director, which was a mad job, that for a while went on some eighteen hours a day. He left us for better things and is about to take off on a diplomatic job.

Before joining our crew of bright-eyed and bushy-tailed babes in the wood, Simpson had been on the staff of the *Herald Tribune* in Paris. There, he accumulated a batch of water-

colors and drawings as sensitive and chic as anything you'd ever find, with signature pronounced Seempsohn.



An off-beat note on the Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men theme came our way the other evening. We picked up a peso jitney (ordinary cars that make a given run) in front of the Cathedral and found the normal assortment of passengers, comfortably polite. At the following corner the seat next to us was filled by a man who soon afterwards settled himself sleepily on the editorial shoulder.

Not knowing what to do about that, we just let him sleep. Shortly he awoke and drowsily confided that he had decided, for the coming year, to be good to himself. He said he had just that moment decided it, because of the atmosphere in the car.

Lifting his head off the shoulder, he proceeded to describe what he meant. "All the little bourgeois pleasures," said he. "This family atmosphere, the soup on the table, all that."

"So I've decided to be a better, kinder man and more tolerant myself. It is a good thing to do. I have been cruel and inconsiderate many, many times."

We asked, was he a newspaperman? Unshaven, drunk, talking in this fashion, who else but a reporter?

"Oh, no," he said, drowsing off again.

"Then what? You are a poet, perhaps?"

"No," he said settling himself back on our shoulder. "Just a drunk." And went fast asleep.

# News and Comment

## Bonds Across the Sea

A group of visiting Frenchmen — economists, bankers, industrialists and foreign traders — took a long look at Mexico last month, and liked what they saw.

Headed by M. Emile Roche, president of the French Economic Council, the reigning authority in that nation's economic affairs, the group toured key industrial areas throughout the Republic to see about the possibilities of stepping up Franco-Mexican trade as well as increasing French capital investment here.

Although the mission was led by a French government official and received and guided here by the Secretaries of Treasury and Economy, both groups pointed out the necessity for the bulk of the job being carried on by private business and capital in both countries.

On their departure the French group made it clear that they were greatly impressed by Mexico's economic development, and that personally as well as officially they would plump for increased business between the two countries. A Franco-Mexican Committee was formed with members in both countries to further this end.

## The Seas and the Sands

Rich in subsoil wealth, Mexico is now also taking stock of other natural resources. In collaboration with the Scripps Institute of Oceanography and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mexican scientists have just reported to the Mexican Institute of Renewable Natural Resources on a study made of marine life along the Pacific Coast. Listed among industrial resources is the grey whale, which takes refuge in the bays of Lower California, but sometimes migrates as far north as San Francisco. At one time close to extinction, it has now multiplied enough so that a controlled exploitation can again be carried on. The Guadalupe seal, prized for its fine skin, and hunted almost to the death of the species, is again on the increase in the islands off Mexico, and it may be possible soon to hunt them again commercially.

In the desert, the Natural Resources Institute is carrying out an investiga-

tion in collaboration with the Rockefeller Foundation. Two scientists from Mexico and one from the U.S. are working in an area of 278,739 square kilometers in the desert areas of the states of Nuevo León, San Luis Potosí, Coahuila and Zacatecas, projecting the cultivation of desert plants of industrial value. Among them are the *ixtle*, a plant which produces a rope-like fiber similar to henequen and sisal; *mezquite*, which has been used to stabilize shifting sand dunes and is also a source of chemical sugars, gum and tannin; and the stately *yucca* (candle of God), a source of cellulose.

## Federal Budget, 1957

An approximate figure, 7,500 million pesos (about 600 million dollars) for next year's budget was announced by Treasury Secretary Antonio Carrillo Flores last month. This represents a 500 million peso increase over this year's budget, but Lic. Carrillo Flores makes it clear that the increase is in no sense inflationary since with the speeded-up rhythm of industrialization and the constant increase in national savings, the Government can expect increased revenue, and intends to repay foreign credits with the income these productive credits will bring in. The Government also expects to have increasingly more money to spend on development projects — hydroelectric, irrigation and communication — thus feeding into the industrial expansion spiral up.

## Ions

On the right of November 4 it rained in Mexico City — a hard, cold (even hail) rain that came accompanied by much thunder and lightning, lasting about 40 minutes, and stopping as abruptly as it began. Most unseasonable — it was more than a month beyond the limits of the regular rainy season and not forecast by the government weather bureau.

Next day's headlines said the torrent had been caused by a Professor Ugalde Pérez and his little apparatus that works by means of "ionactive substances" which when "agitated" produce rain. And, although a private meteorological service for the airlines states

that it saw the storm coming a day ahead, there are still those who think it might be well for meteorologists to keep an eye on Professor Ugalde and his overactive ions.

## Lower California Ferry

Travel into the lower reaches of Baja California has until now been possible only by air. A new ferry boat service connecting the peninsula with the mainland has been announced by the Ministry of the Navy, and is due to begin operations shortly. It will connect the mainland ports of Guaymas and Topolobampo with Baja California ports of Santa Rosalia, San Felipe and La Paz, facilitating also the transport of freight-loaded trucks.

## New Business

322 new businesses in the manufacturing field have been formed in the first nine months of this year, according to figures just released by the Nacional Financiera. This makes manufacturing the second biggest factor in the national economy, giving way only to commerce, and taking a strong lead over agriculture and mining, which once dominated the Mexican economic panorama.

The new businesses were split evenly in number between manufacturers of consumer and industrial goods. Of the increased manufacturing potential, 77% settled within the very tight confines of the Federal District. The only other areas of Mexico which got an appreciable share were the State of Mexico (which completely surrounds the Federal District) and Baja California Norte. The Government plans to promote decentralization, by various methods; among them, the new "industrial cities" which are being opened up by various state governments (see MTM, November 1956).

## Opening

The 30th hotel to fly the Hilton flag will open in Mexico City on December 8. Top man, Conrad Hilton, has invited an international assembly of guests, among them, the Mayors of New York and New Orleans, the Misses Universe of 1955 and 1956, and Ginger Rogers. During the four days of fiesta, guests will be treated to mariachis, bullfights, a beach lunch in Acapulco, and dining and dancing in the Belvedere Room, Mexico's answer to the "Top of the Mark".



Photo Marilú Pease.

In Mexico traffic cops have their day — December 22 — and if the cop on your corner has closed his eyes every time you passed the light, this is your chance.



Photos Mayo

## *in december*

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, the dark-skinned Virgin, is reverently worshipped every day of the year, but on December 12, her day, the Basilica is visited by hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, many of whom climb the hill of Tepeyac, where the first Guadalupe shrine was built, on their knees.

Christmas parties — posadas — begin on December 16 and are held every night through the 23rd. The parties begin with processions begging lodging for the Holy Family, and end with the traditional breaking of goodie-filled piñatas.

Photo Jenaro Olivares



# Christmas in Mexico

Posadas, Piñatas, and Medieval Processions Add Fantasy to the Fiest



The markets are invaded by piñatas and the fillings thereof: fruit, peanuts, candy, sugar-cane sticks. Jokers have been known to add frogs or white mice.

Posadas, which begin on the 16th, come to a climax the night before Christmas Eve. Rich and poor celebrate similarly, beginning the party with a procession that sings, asking for lodging, impersonating Mary and Joseph on the first Christmas Eve.



# Fiest Oaxaca celebrates Christmas with a unique "Night of the Radishes" and torch parades

By Jeannie Gleesen

Who could ask for a more appealing object around which to build an entire festival than a common radish?

Oddly enough, *La Noche de Rábanos* came into being due to events which took place a couple of hundred years before a radish had ever been seen here. The story goes back to around the middle of the 16th century, when the first Spanish settlers were replanning a city which had, in pre-Columbian days, been known as Huaxiyacac (now Oaxaca), and which the Spanish colonists intended to call Villa de Antequera.

Rebellious Indians menaced from all sides, and after many unsuccessful attempts to force their submission, the task of pacifying them was left to the friars, who were almost immediately successful. The Spaniards demanded that the Indians take over the construction work in the town and, in short, all the dirty work.

They were to be paid for their efforts, by exemption from the taxes and tributes they would otherwise be obliged to contribute as members of a conquered people, and they were also promised a small plot of land each. However, this promise was conveniently forgotten until the Indians (who were, incidentally, known as *naborias*) set up such a howl of protest that it came to the ears of the Viceroy, who decreed that a village was to be erected for them on the banks of the Atoyac River. This could hardly be expected to please their masters; neither did it do the *naborias* much good, since they so rarely had the chance to cultivate their little plots. Instead, they slaved, quite literally, to build up, with their bare hands, what was to become the third city in New Spain.

For the next 200 years or so their lives consisted principally of chain-

(Continued to page 24)



The radish is King of the Carnival on December 23 in Oaxaca. The fertile soil and fruitful climate do strange things to this innocuous little vegetable...and the Indian craftsmen do the rest.

Photos Alfonso Rivas



At 10 pm on Christmas Eve in Oaxaca, every parish church enters its float in the medieval parade known as the *Calendas*. The floats dramatize the patron saint of the parish, and the rest of the community goes along in torchlight procession. Many torchbearers make lanterns, of a fanciful kind, and flower vendors add exhibitions to the carnival-type parade. Left, the mummers that head the parade.





Beauty and abundance...these qualities, in that order, characterize displays.

# Markets

ALL OF MEXICO FROM TIME  
IMMEMORIAL HAS TAKEN ITS  
WARES TO MARKET...

By Pauline R. Kibbe

Market places — or *tianguis*, as they were called in ancient times — have always been the center of life and activity in Mexican towns.

In 1519 the Tlaltelolco market, about a mile north of the Zócalo, so filled the Spaniards with amazement and admiration that pages were devoted to its description in official reports of the conquerors, as well as in the annals of later historians. According to Hernán Cortés, it was of such size that 60,000 people congregated there daily, "buying and selling every class of merchandise to be found in the country."

Cortés was impressed with the manner in which the market was run, each

Photos Marilú Pease



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Engraving by José Gómez.

class of merchandise displayed only in its own "street", and the articles sold by the piece or measure, not by weight. He remarked also on the efficiency with which the market was policed and the dispatch with which miscreants were brought to justice before the market judges.

Among those who brought their wares to the Tlaltelolco market, says the historian Prescott, were the silversmiths of Azcapotzalco, the potters and jewelers of Cholula, the painters of Texcoco, the stonecutters of Tenayuca, the hunters of Jilotepec, the fishermen of Cushtlahuac, the fruit growers of the hot lowlands, the chair and mat makers of Cuautitlán, and the florists of Xochimilco.

At the beginning of the Colonial Era, by order of Charles V of Spain, the Municipal Palace was built on the Zócalo, where the Federal District government buildings stand today, and around it the slaughter house and numerous store buildings, the rents from which were supposed to support the municipal government. Clothing vendors established themselves at an early date in *cajones* (literally "boxes") on two sides of the plaza. The name derived from the fact that the *puestos*, or booths, were constructed of the wood of the *cajones* in which clothing was shipped from Europe. Flowers and vegetables, brought in by boat on the great canal from Ixtacalco, were sold on the side of the plaza facing the Municipal Palace.

Since state occasions were celebrated in the Zócalo, it was necessary each time to remove all traces of the

market, including the great mounds of filth and garbage which accumulated from one such occasion to the next. When Charles IV was proclaimed King of Spain in 1789, the second Count of Revillagigedo then being Viceroy, the plaza was cleared as usual for a mammoth fiesta, and the Viceroy forbade the market's reinstallation. Instead, he ordered it removed to the Volador Plaza, at one corner of the Zócalo, where the Supreme Court building now stands.

This site, the Plaza del Volador, had already enjoyed a long and colorful history. It took its name from the fact that, before the Conquest — and even afterwards, according to some

chroniclers — the Aztecs celebrated the *fuego nuevo* on that spot with the dance of the *Voladores*, flyers. (See MTM for June 1955.) The *fuego nuevo* (new fire) marked the end of each 52-year cycle of the Aztec calendar, and the Aztec religion taught that at the conclusion of one such cycle the world would come to an end.

On the last night of the 52-year period, therefore, the priests marched from the city to the hill of Ixtapalapa, where solemn religious ceremonies were performed, keeping the universe alive for another 52 years.

Bearing flaming torches, the procession returned triumphantly to the city and festivities began, the main event being the dance of the *Voladores*. In the plaza a tall tree, shorn of its branches, was erected with a small wooden platform at the top, from which hung four ropes. The *voladores*, men dressed in eagle feathers, climbed the pole, and while one of them remained aloft to dance on the tiny platform, four others "flew" out from the top of the pole on the ropes, each of them, before touching the ground, circling the pole exactly 13 times, in commemoration of the 52 years of the calendar cycle.

The Plaza del Volador was among the properties ceded to Hernán Cortés by Charles V of Spain, and remained in the possession of his descendants until 1837. It was the scene of a celebrated *Auto General de Fé* of the Inquisition on April 11, 1649.

The cornerstone of a permanent market building on the Plaza del Volador was laid in 1841 by Antonio López de Santa Anna, then provisional president of the Republic. Formally opened in 1844, the market continued in operation until 1890, when it was converted into a bazaar. The building was demolished in 1935 to make way for the Supreme Court building.

Some time before it was done away with completely, the Volador market had already become inadequate. The city was spreading out in all directions, and more than one big market place was needed. Because of its location on the main canal connecting the city with Xochimilco, the old Convent of the Merced, two or three blocks southeast of the Volador Plaza, was chosen as the logical site for the wholesale fruit and vegetable market.

La Lagunilla, now occupying more or less the quadrangle formed by the

(Continued on page 17)



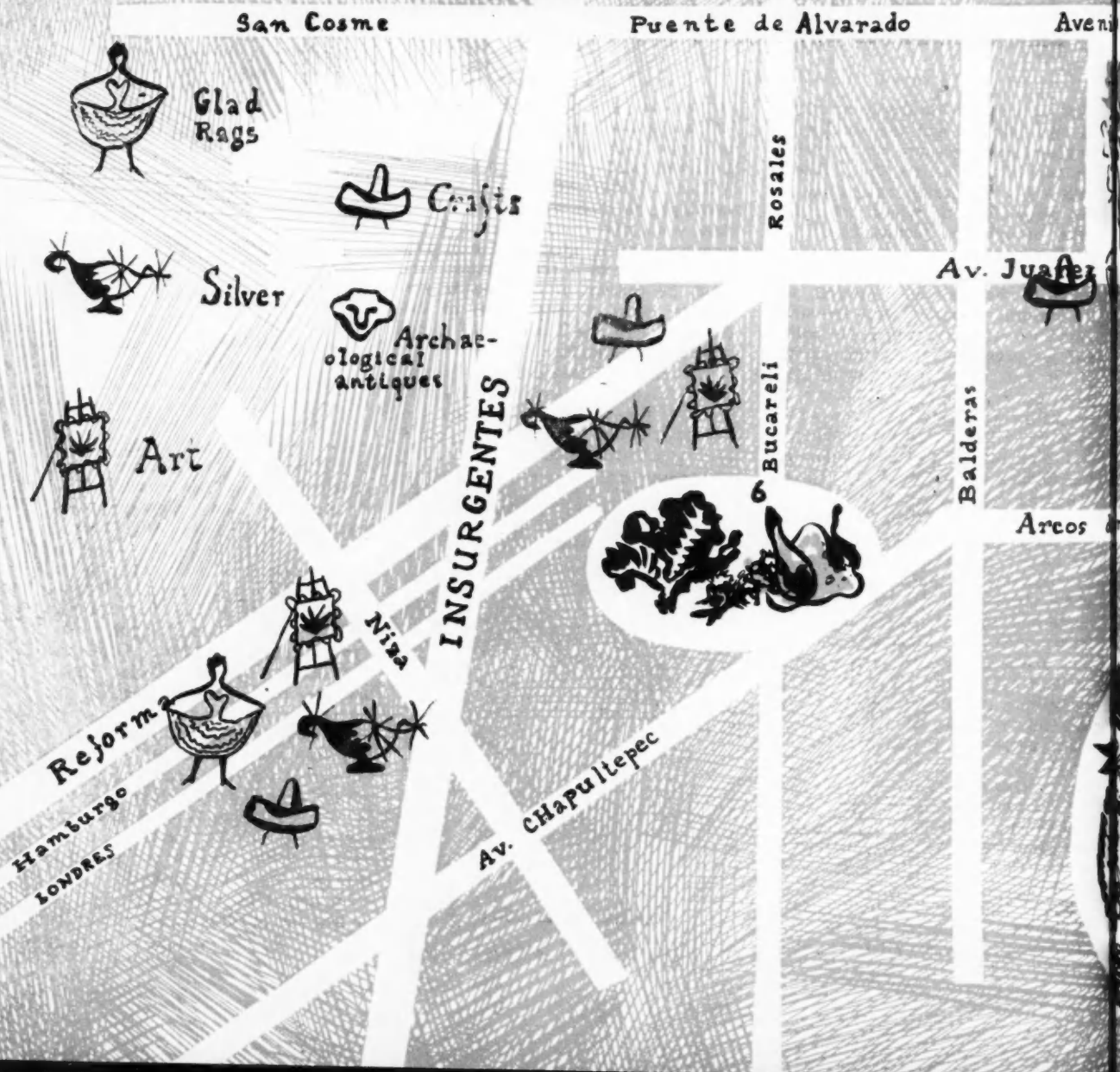
Engraving by F. G. Ledesma.

# THE HAPPY SHOPPERS' Map of WHERE to SPEND MONEY In Mexico city Effectively

Drawn for Mexico/this Month by Vladimiro Machado

## MARKETS:

- 1.- Lagunilla (Everything, and then some)
- 2.- Merced (Produce and peasant crafts)
- 3.- Abelardo Rodriguez (Pottery and crafts)
- 4.- San Juan (Meat, fish, fruit, etc.)
- 5.- Flower Market
- 6.- Juárez (General food and etceteras)
- 7.- Jamaica (Peasant produce, including livestock)
- 8.- Xochimilco (Produce, flowers, crafts)





Mina

B. Dominguez

Venezuela



A. Serdan

Allende

Rep. de Chile

Argentina

Tacuba



Zocalo



Madero



de Letran

Bolivar

Isabel la Catolica

J.M. Izazaga



San Juan

Pino Suarez



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# MEXICO CITY MARKETS

## (Key to Map)

The Lagunilla market has a special fame among markets — a place where if you look long and hard enough the most exotic, unbelievable things can be found — and cheap, too, if one is a master bargainer. First steps in construction on the new enlarged group of market buildings have been taken by razing buildings adjoining the old market. Meanwhile, to ease congestion in this downtown area, all the vendors have been ordered out of the middle of the streets into the old market building. They are elbow to elbow but, By George, much neater and tidier.

The Merced, the largest market in Mexico City, serves all buyers — those who buy wholesale, those who want a small quantity but still for resale, and the direct consumer, who is probably buying a week's supply of food for a very large family, because going to the Merced means a full-fledged expedition, complete with a detailed map of what's where and a full complement of small boy bearers. Construction of the five new units is now well under way.

Abelardo Rodríguez market, named after a former President of Mexico, was the first of the major markets to be rejuvenated, and several years before the present epoch of market clean-up. Out back, are the pottery vendors — a truly remarkable display of stand on stand of all the major pottery styles of the Republic.

San Juan market has for some time been the number one market for the housewife who wanted the freshest seafood, the finest fruit and vegetables and some of the more out-of-the-ordinary foods. Here you can find even such foreign delicacies as ginger root, bean sprouts and soy sauce.

The Flower Market (there's another one still bigger on the outskirts of Chapultepec Park) is a unit of the San Juan market. It used to be the outside border of the old market, facing on a little park-plaza, but when the market was enlarged and rebuilt, it was moved into a huge building all its own. Here you'll find bushel baskets of orchids and gardenias, forests of gladiolas, and the first tiny bunches of violets.



Drawing by Isidoro Ocampo.

The Juárez market is typical of the big neighborhood markets scattered throughout the city. Some 17 of these markets have been completely rebuilt and inaugurated in the last three years. The remainder are either in the planning or construction stage.

Jamaica, on the southeast limits of the city, is the half-way point between the vegetable and flower gardens of Xochimilco and the capital (the big Viga Canal used to pass right by here, but recently was filled in), and small farmers bring their produce and livestock here for sale and transportation into the city proper. Its new home will be inaugurated shortly.

Xochimilco is the starting point for most of the fresh vegetables coming into the city. Until the last decade a canal connected Xochimilco with the capital — a remnant of Aztec times — and vendors paddled their canoes laden with great bunches of flowers and vegetables into the city. Now trucks do the job, and the canoes are used only for local traffic in Xochimilco itself, and the barges, flower-bedecked, are for picnics and tourists.

*Note: For pifatas, any market will do — but the bigger, the market the greater the variety of pifatas.*



(Continued from page 13)

streets of Allende, Panamá, Brasil and Perú, immediately northwest of the Zócalo, gradually took over the vendors of clothing, furniture and various other merchandise. All the commerce that remained in the Volador was transferred, in 1890, to the Plaza of Mixcalco,

on Guatemala and Vidal Alcocer streets, northeast of the Zócalo.

Although all market places are open seven days a week, one day of the week is specified as "market day". In the Coyoacán market, for example, some 336 vendors are permanently housed in the new market place; but on Friday, Coyoacán's "market day", the total number of vendors rises to

more than 1,500, the transients establishing themselves in concrete stalls provided for that purpose in the courtyard of the market building. These mobile merchants move from one market to another on the respective "market days".

This is the system in operation throughout the country. Each city, town and village is thus part of a continuing cycle of market days, which in many cases are like fairs, drawing merchants and purchasers from many miles around. Dating from ancient days, this system, absorbed into medieval European patterns by the Spaniards, remains essentially the same today.

One can only wonder what would have been the Aztecs' reaction to the attractive modern buildings of concrete, glass and mosaic tile — complete with the latest refrigeration devices, nurseries for the children of the market vendors, and uniformed attendants — in which the capital's market places are rapidly being housed. Sixteen new plants are already in operation, and more under construction.

Much of the storied color and glamor are missing, but the orderliness, functional beauty, and convenience of today's market places recall the Aztec system in many ways, and they are rich still, in human interest.

Photo courtesy D. D. F.



Modern markets are immense. This one, in Coyoacán, repeats the traditional canvas parasol motif in the skin-concrete ceiling.

Here, outside a modern factory building, tradition springs up... as well as the universal game of keeping store.



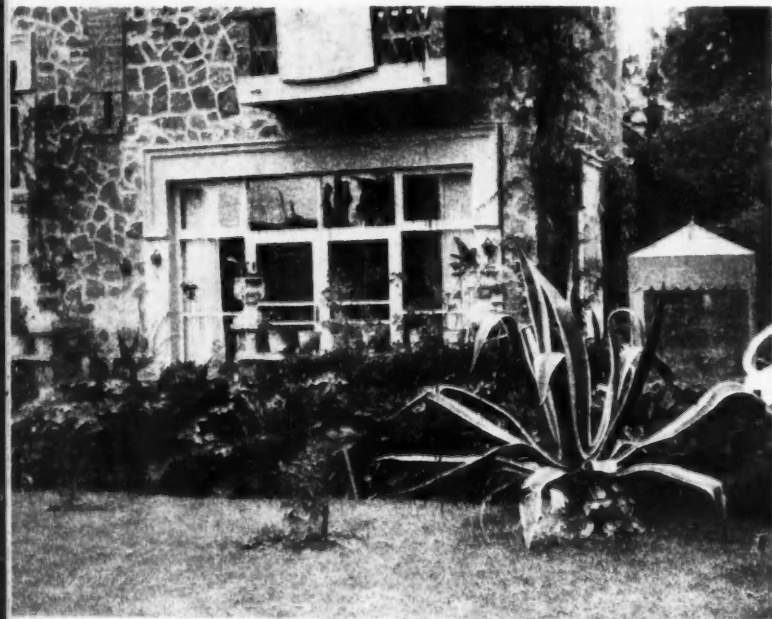
Photo Marilú Pease

# People and their Places

## TAMAYO



In this house in Coyoacán, a suburb of Mexico City, Tamayo has played with texture, color, and has given a personal stamp to the magnificent old garden.



Photos Jenaro Olivares



Man in a Sack, or Self Portrait by Rufino Tamayo.

Rufino Tamayo, of Oaxaca, New York, Paris, Rome, and Coyoacán, is a moody man with the palette of an angel and prices way up there in the art markets of the world.

Stemming from the "Generation of Big Ones," as the Rivera, Orozco, Siqueiros group are called in Mexico, Tamayo split off from social significance into pure painting, while living and teaching in New York.

He came up the ladder of fame and fortune the usual hard way, especially for artists of his uncompromising, subjective type. Personally he is not nearly so forbidding as some of his work might imply. He has a handsome, richly colorful house in Coyoacán, on the outskirts of Mexico City, likes parties very much, and is brilliant on the guitar.

Rivera and Siqueiros for the past few years have carried on a running feud with Tamayo, accusing him of deserting the cause of patriotism and the people, for the sake of chic. Tamayo has retorted that painting is painting and a man's work should not be confused with his politics.



## The Arts

*Piñatas* can be divided broadly two groups — the plump, many-horned classic one that has a clay pot for a base, and those that are constructed on a papier maché base that has been formed layer upon layer into the shape of some bird, beast, or personage.

Photos below show the raw beginning and the gleaming finished product of the first type which requires only cardboard cones, metallic, crepe and tissue paper, in addition to the pot.

The second type, more difficult, but which lends itself to infinite variations, is demonstrated in principle in the two pictures top right. The bulkiest part should contain some sort of clay pot, so that it breaks with a rewarding smash and the goodies shower out. Around, this, cardboard is cut and joined to fashion the framework of legs,

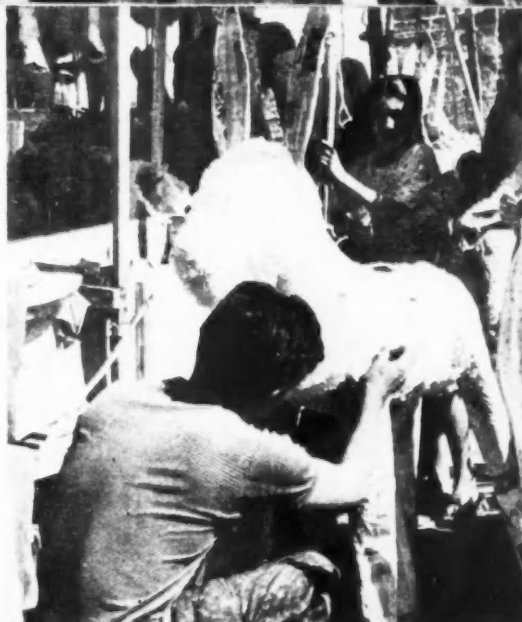


head, ears, etcetera. Over this, damp newspaper, which has been soaked in a thin flour and water paste, is layered on to give the figure the desired contours. Once dry, tissue paper and/or crepe paper fringed and ruffled finish off the piñata. Painted features and glued-on clothes are just a matter of time and imagination.

Only a reminder — don't forget in your creative fervor that the purpose of a piñata is to be filled, so leave a big opening in the top for stuffing. A sturdy means for hanging the piñata is also a very important consideration. With the clay pot kind, 3 holes should be carefully drilled well below the rim; with the papier-maché ones, if possible anchor the cord into the clay pot and, if not, bury it as deeply as possible in the paper layers.



## *Piñatas*



Photos Mayo



## The Arts



Romano Picutti, founder of the Morelia Boys' Choir.

Photo Joseph Hellmer

Photo courtesy INBA

The music world, particularly in Mexico, suffered a heartfelt loss last month in the death of Romano Picutti, director of the Boys' Choir of Morelia. Since 1949 Picutti, who was only 43 years of age at his death, had devoted himself to the Choir and the 32 boys who compose it, touring the U.S. with them in 1953 and again in 1954. Italian by birth, Picutti studied in Italy and in Vienna, and for 12 years directed the world famous Viennese Children's Choir. Luis Berber, of Morelia, formerly assistant director, has been named to succeed Picutti.

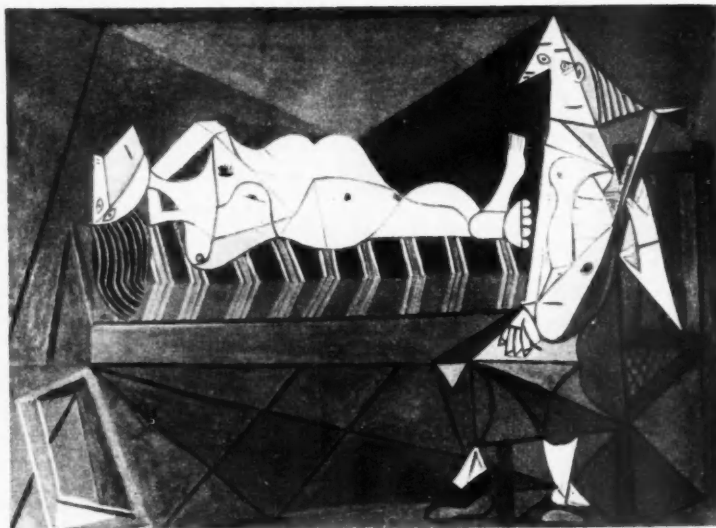
## PICASSO

### and French Painting in Mexico

All the great names of contemporary French art were represented at the large show in the Fine Arts Palace last month.

Jean Cassou, the well-known critic, accompanied the show and gave a series of lectures presumably for the purpose of explaining abstract painting and making it more palatable to those who still don't understand or like it, and moreover don't want to.

Gem of the show in this bracket was the Picasso shown above, right.



"Page 217". Oil by Vlady in current exhibition at the Proteo Gallery.



Photo José Verde O



## \$1,000 a Line

In the past few months the new, tiny, and extremely lively Antonio Souza gallery has managed to attract considerable attention with the quality of its shows.

Currently exhibited are choice items from the work of European moderns, entitled "From Renoir to Matisse."

The drawing above, a Cezanne, is valued at dollars 35,000. Or approximately \$1,000 per line.

## VLADY

Our art director, known as Vlady because who can pronounce Vladimir Kibalchich, is having a comprehensive one-man show at the Proteo Gallery this month.

It is generally so difficult to persuade Vlady to show his work, and then actually get him to the point of doing so, that this is indubitably news.

It is not possible to classify Vlady's work as anything except, in the broadest category, modern. Being a truly creative artist, he has made his own style, in which his principal preoccupation is the rendering of color through light, and vice versa. He builds up his forms by indirection and suggestion, achieving a shimmering, vigorous, distinctive result.

John Dos Passos, who visited Mexico recently as a delegate to the Inter-American Congress for Cultural Freedom, took time out to see a few things, among them Vlady's work, of which he wrote:

"It is disquieting painting...

"The observer has to bestir himself. The paintings are putting questions to him. Sometimes you look for a long time before you begin to make out figures of living creatures in these heartbroken thickets of color and light. There are men, women, horses, children. Quixotes and chimeras. Astonished women. There is a Flemish air of bravado about the men. In the children and dogs some fairytale recollection of Chagall perhaps. As you look the figures detach themselves with picaresque intensity like personages in a sideshow at a fairground.

"The test of painting is whether it impresses itself on the imagination. Back home amid the warm festive colors of the North American autumn, even under the tall pines of our forest. I find myself catching sight now and then of the uneasy green and disconcerting blues of some of Vlady's mottled personages."

Son of the great Russian novelist Victor Serge, one of the earliest victims of the Bolshevik dictatorship, Vlady spent his childhood in the atmosphere of idealism and persecution. As a quite small boy he accompanied his father into exile in Siberia, and later, when pressure from European writers (particularly Romain Rolland) brought about Serge's freedom, he lived in Paris; and then — fleeing from the Nazi invasion — settled in Mexico, where Serge died soon after the worldwide success of his extraordinary book *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*.

From his father, Vlady has inherited broad human understanding, sensitivity, and compassion. But, though he is something more than average as a writer, his energies have borne full fruit in painting, where he has amalgamated the Russian flair for fantasy and color, with the cool brilliance and precision of the intellectual

A. B.



## Quote

## Worth Remembering

*"May slavery and class distinctions be abolished for all time, and one American be distinguished from another solely by his vices and his virtues."*

JOSE MARIA MORELOS

INDEPENDENCE LEADER

at Chilpancingo, Gro.

September 1813

This advertisement is sponsored as a public service by Cía. Eléctrica de Tampico, S. A.



# That Street

with the  
Unpronounceable  
Name

By Elsbeth Day

The east side of the Hotel Del Prado in Mexico City is on Revillagigedo Street — a name so forbidding to English-speaking tongues that all dates are made for the front entrance only. Behind that name there is a charming story.

Revilla Ggedo, the illustrious second Count of that name, and 51st

Viceroy of New Spain, was an extraordinary man. During the five years he ruled, from 1789 to 1794, he was responsible for numberless improvements to the City of Mexico, making it more beautiful and also — which took true energy and decision — cleaning it up.

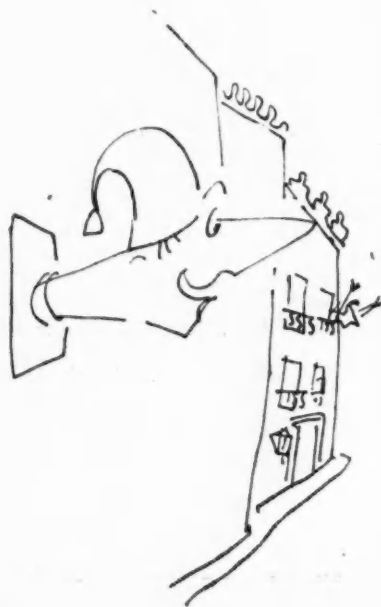
The city had at that time 135,000 inhabitants. (Total population of New Spain in 1790, 5,200,000.) As important a capital then as it is today, it was full of trade and the bustle of business. The arrival of ships either in Veracruz or Acapulco meant brisk trade in the capital, the merchandise working its way up over the mountains, and through equally formidable red tape, to the *estancos* and *cajones* — monopolies, bodegas and retail shops — of the wealthy Spanish merchants. Native industry flourished on Calle Plateros, the Street of the Silversmiths (today, Avenida Madero), while other artisans peddled their wares in the Portal de Mercaderes, on the main plaza.

On the other side of the main plaza or Zócalo, stood the old vegetable market. It was both a convenience and an eyesore. A stone's throw from the Palace, it must have annoyed the Viceroy on hot days, for he ordered it moved away and "a spacious and well-ordered building was built on the site, which was called the 'Volador,'"

(where the Department of Justice building now stands).

This added to the appearance of the main plaza but chroniclers of the time fail to relate: what happened to the docks where all the vegetables used to be unloaded, precisely there?

Mexico was still "the Venice of America". All the food that came into the city had to be brought in by waterways. It also had to pay duty. Produce of the tropics, sugar cane, cocoa, coffee and fruit, shipped from the Port of Deposit in Chalco, would arrive in Mexico City at the Port of San Lázaro (where the old railway station is today, on the road to the air-



port). There the cargoes were assessed for duty, then reloaded and allowed to continue downstream into the city.

It was not unusual to find dead bodies floating in the canals, at dawn. Some unfortunate who had been murdered, or perhaps merely gotten drunk and fallen in. There was no public lighting system until the energetic Revilla Gígedo ordered that "every man in the city must leave a light burning all night over his doorstep." This was actually the forerunner of the public lighting system in Mexico City. He was also, says history, responsible for the first underground drainage to be laid in the city.

In spite of the lamps left burning, criminals lurked wherever opportunity offered, ambushing citizens at times in the city park or near its walls. The public park — the Alameda — was at that time surrounded by high walls. The Viceroy, battling against crime and other human failings, ordered it to be closed and locked at night.

One night — so the story goes — perhaps to make sure his orders in

regard to the park gate had been obeyed, the Viceroy went for a stroll in the vicinity of the Alameda. He was disgusted to see the whole place cluttered with ramshackle huts and stalls, and the canals nearly full of rubbish. Furious — this was near midnight — the Viceroy went to the house of the Regent of the city, yanked him out of bed, took him to the spot where the street that is called Revillagigedo begins today, and said:

"You should be ashamed of the sight and smell of your city. I want a street, this wide, mind you, cut through here at once and all this rubbish cleared away. If the street is not finished and paved by dawn tomorrow, I will hang all your workmen; and you with them."

Legend says the order was obeyed. And so, much to the amazement of the inhabitants, they awoke to find a street, of a width at that time equivalent almost to a boulevard, where none had been the night before. Its name: Revillagigedo. For the Regent was a courtier and a canny man.

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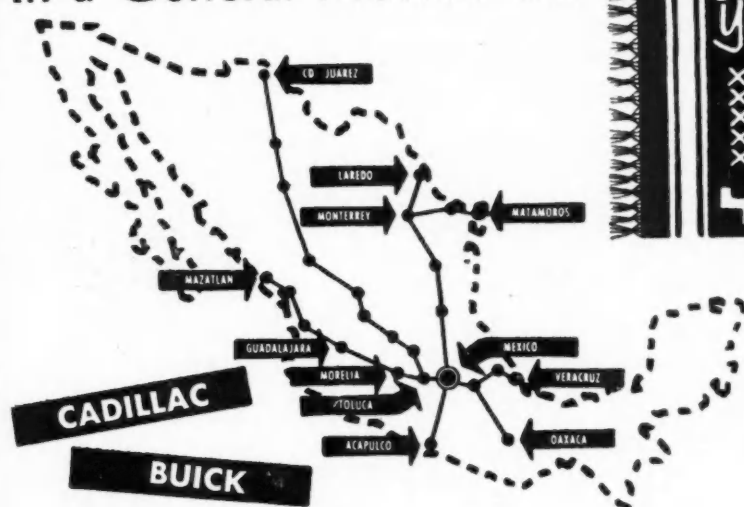
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## NOCHE DE RABANOS

(Continued from page 11)

gang labor to build and care for the city, until the Franciscans embarked on a campaign to encourage horticulture among them, and allow them to use their little plots. The friars donated the flower and vegetable seeds they had so lovingly transported from Europe, which included — guess what — radishes. They organized flower and vegetable shows. And so, at the end of 300 years of history, we come to the first *Noche de Rábanos*, which took place more than a century ago.

The radishes handed out by the friars for nutritional purposes behaved most unorthodoxly in their new environment. They grew to prodigious proportions and assumed a variety of truly awesome shapes. Naturally they appealed tremendously to the Indian imagination, creative ability and sense of humor; so it was not long before the radishes were being dressed up to represent beautiful girls and cackling witches, assorted angels and the devil, animals, and anything else their fertile minds could think of. The only thing these creations had in common was that they in no way resembled the friars' conception of a radish.

The fair took place on December 23, and soon became an annual one-night carnival. The entire population of the town streams into the main plaza, which is surrounded by typical vendors' booths crowded for the occasion with candy, fruit, flowers, and Christmas novelties.

And then, of course, there are the *rábanos*, medieval, surrealistic, fabulously funny and grotesque, displayed in all their finery. Each booth is visited with care and interest — like an art show. When every booth has been looked at and not one item has been missed, one goes over to the *buñuelo* vendor, takes one of these searing hot fritters in a small, shallow earthenware bowl, and swallows the fritter hurriedly — no use in waiting, since it appears to remain eternally at the same sizzling temperature — and then proceeds to smash the dish on the sidewalk.

Late and happily, one picks one's way through the slivers of earthenware which are scattered everywhere by this time, for a last look at the few remaining *rábanos*, leering through the gloom.

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American Embassy, Reforma and Lafragua. Tel. 35-95-00.

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Benjamin Franklin Library, Niza 53.

Central Balneológica, San Juan de Leján 24. Free information on Mexican spas and health resorts.

Mexico City Daily Bulletin, Gómez Farías 41. Tel. 16-69-60. General tourist information.

Mexican-North American Cultural Institute, Hamburgo 115. Tel. 25-16-54, 25-16-55, 25-16-56.

National Tourist Department, Juárez 89. General travel information.

PEMEX Travel Club, Juárez 89. Highway information. Publishes an excellent auto travel bulletin in English.

The News, Morelos 4. Tel. 21-23-35, 46-69-04, 46-68-40. Worldwide and Mexican news, with UP, AP, INS coverage, US columnists and comics.

## IN THE SHOPS

### Mexican Christmas Carols

Mexican Christmas music is seldom heard on radio airwaves, nor is it even so much a part of church celebrations as the Christmas music of other countries. It belongs, instead, to the home, and to a considerable extent, to the streets. It is the most important part of the *posadas* — the nine days of special parties which precede Christmas, and which reenact, sometimes in dramatic play but always in song, the story of Mary and Joseph in search of a place where their Son could be born.

*Posada* singers carry carved figures of the Holy Family as they wind their way along the village streets. But even in the most sophisticated homes, where *posadas* survive mostly as nine days of parties, the procession still forms before the door of the house where the party is to take place, and the ancient songs are still sung.

Whether *posada* singers set out along

## NIGHT SPOTS



From December 16 to 24, inclusive, all of the capital's night clubs will present the traditional Mexican *posadas*. In addition to the regularly scheduled floor shows, there will be special Christmas festivities — *piñatas* with a profusion of serpentinas, confetti, whistles, festive caps and similar gadgets.

On Christmas Eve, the gaiety will reach its peak, with holiday foods and special floor shows. December 28, the Day of the "Innocent Saints", is the Mexican version of April Fool's Day, with appropriate activities in the night spots. And in all of the city's clubs, bars and restaurants, the New Year will be ushered in with unrestrained joy and hilarity.

**Belvedere**, Continental Hilton, 15th floor. Panoramic view of the city. Dining and dancing. Vicente Garrido and his orchestra. No minimum.

**El Satélite**, next to the Teatro Insurgentes, Insurgentes 1587. Night club. Floor shows at 1 and 2:30 am, with comedians Tin Tan and Marcelo, Cuban vedette Vicky Codina, the orchestra of Adolfo Girón, and the Batachá quartet.

**Hotel Bamer**. In the Bamerette, dining and dancing. In the restaurant-bar, Lucero Aguilar and her orchestra.

**El Eco**, Sullivan 43. Night club and restaurant-bar. Dixie jazz, Be-Bop and Rock-and-Roll. No minimum.

**Bar Alffer**, Revillagigedo 18. Swiss singer Karla Hofer has been held over.

**Monte Cassino**, Génova 56. Restaurant-bar with the Trio Huracán, and the organ music of Edmundo Roldán.

**Restaurant 1-2-3**, Liverpool 123. Restaurant-bar, international cuisine and continuous music. No minimum.


**Quid**, restaurant-bar on Puebla near Insurgentes. Good food. Elvira Ríos, popular Mexican chanteuse. Pianist Pepe Jaramillo and organist Nacho García from 9 pm.

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the street to ask for shelter in various homes, or cluster in front of one door, lighted candles in hand, to repeat their pleas for shelter, the order of singing is almost always the same. The procession begins with a litany, usually the *Kyrie Eleison*. Before the door, they change to the song in which they ask for a place to stay: "In the name of Heaven I beg you for shelter — my beloved wife can no longer travel." Behind the door, another group answers: "This is no inn. Keep on going and don't trouble us; I can't open the door."

When, eventually, the kind innkeeper is found and the door is opened, the pilgrims are greeted with a song of welcome from within the house: "Enter, Holy Pilgrims, and take your corner — not in my poor house but in my heart."

Frequently a lullaby follows, sung, supposedly, while a figure of the Christ Child is placed in the manger that has been prepared for Him. And then the group breaks into the *piñata* song, calling for candies for the children and a *piñata* to break.

Another sort of Christmas music, also a heritage from Spain, is common to many parts of Mexico. This is the dance of the shepherds, *Las Pastoras*, and it is often danced by young girls or boys during the Christmas season. Dancers carry thin painted sticks to mark time to the slow and stately steps of the dance, accompanied by singing, sometimes with the addition of violin or guitar. The verses are sung to the Child Jesus, frequently in the words of Mary singing her Child to sleep and predicting His future greatness.

*Pastorelas*, religious dramas, are also sometimes sung with Christmas themes, as are *villancicos* — Spanish carols praising the newborn Savior.

Sheet music of all *posada* songs and litanies are available in book and stationery shops for weeks before Christmas. Recorded Mexican Christmas music is limited, but some is included on two LP discs by the Niños Cantores de Morelia, recorded by Joseph Hellmer; and *Period* and *Capitol-Musart* each have some selections:

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Mexican *posada* food is usually hot and spicy, to counteract the chill of a walk in the crisp night air. Custom calls for tamales, but modern *posada*-givers are likely to add *bacalao*, dried codfish cooked in oil and garlic with tomatoes and green olives, or any other dishes that please fancy and holiday pocketbook. Traditional Christmas dishes often appear — one such is *revoltijo*, a seaweed-like green cooked in red mole sauce along with shrimp dumplings. And another frequent star on the *posada* buffet, which we sometimes suspect not even hide-bound traditionalists eat, is Christmas Eve Salad — a mixture of cooked beets with almost everything that comes out of a *piñata* (sugar cane, oranges, sugar candies, apples, maybe; nuts, usually).

So food for a *posada* is really anything you like, plus anything that looks impressive to guests, plus anything you feel you simply *can't*, for grandmother's sake, leave off the table. And drink will be either hot or warming: steaming chocolate for children, and a variety of bottles for adults.

If you want to break your MTM-designed *piñata* in style, call in friends for a *posada* on one of the nine days before Christmas. Serve tamale pie for warmth and a nod to tradition, *tostadas* for fun, and whipped pink-and-green almond pudding to impress people. We give you recipes for the last two, designed to serve about 12 people.

### TOSTADAS

These sound troublesome, but all of the work, except for last-minute assembly, is done hours — or even days — ahead of time.

First make a *salsa mexicana*: skin and chop 3 large, ripe tomatoes; or drain and measure 2 cups of canned tomatoes and chop fine. Also chop very fine 1 small onion. Mince 2 hot green chiles — use fresh, if they're sold in your area, canned, or the small hot peppers bottled in vinegar and sold as pepper sauce. If none of



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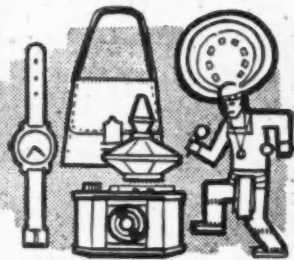
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these is available, tabasco sauce, cayenne pepper or chili powder make good substitutes. The sauce should be hot enough to tingle, and if you want authenticity, it should be hot enough to make your eyes water. Season to taste with salt and garlic salt, a tablespoon of olive oil, and a little vinegar or lemon juice if desired. Chill for several hours while flavors blend.

Then make fried beans, *trijoles refritos*: Open two No. 2 cans of chili beans or kidney beans, and mash the contents with a potato masher, or buzz a moment or two in the electric blender. Heat 3 to 4 tablespoons bacon fat or lard in a large, heavy skillet. Add mashed beans and liquid and cook and stir over high heat until beans form a thick but soft paste. Cool and refrigerate.

Shred a small head of romaine, wrap in waxed paper, and chill. Also shred enough cooked chicken, pork or Monterey jack cheese to make about 1 and 1/2 cups of meat or cheese. Chill this, also.

And finally, have ready 24 *tostadas* or *raspadas*, which are crisply toasted tortillas. Most Mexican food stores in large cities sell these.

But canned or frozen tortillas can be fried, one at a time in hot oil, until crisp and brown. And if you live where not even tortillas are sold, crisp toast circles can be substituted.

Just before you wish to serve the *tostadas*, toss the finely shredded romaine with olive oil, vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste. Spread crisp *tostadas*, *raspadas*, fried tortillas or toast circles with the mashed fried beans. Add a generous fistful of lettuce salad, and top with strips of meat or cheese or both. Serve *tostadas* on a large platter, together with the bowl of *salsa mexicana*, and let guests spoon on sauce to taste.

## MEXICAN FLAG PUDDING

The Mexican flag is red and green and white, and so is Christmas, which is a happy sort of coincidence. The pudding, which is more snow than solid, is sweet and cool and a fine way to follow up a hot sauce.

To make it, combine 2 tablespoons (2 envelopes) unflavored gelatin, 1/2 cup sugar, 1/2 cup flour and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a saucepan. Stir in slowly, mixing well, 3-1/2 cups milk. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and boils. Remove from heat and cool; when cool and thickened, beat with a rotary beater until smooth.

Separate 6 eggs and beat the whites until foamy; save yolks for a custard sauce. Continue to beat whites until nearly stiff, and then add 1 cup sugar, a tablespoon at a time, beating until meringue is stiff and glossy. Also beat 1 cup whipping cream until barely stiff. Fold 1-1/2 teaspoons almond extract, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla, the whipped cream and egg white meringue into cooled gelatin mixture, and fold gently until well blended. Divide mixture into 3 bowls.

To one, add a few drops of red food coloring to tint a delicate pink. To the second, add a few drops of green coloring. Leave third portion white. Pour pink layer into an oiled 9x12 inch pan. Pour white portion carefully on top. Add green layer, being careful not to disturb the bottom layers. Chill 3 or more hours, or until firm. If you like, you can sprinkle a few chopped maraschino cherries between red and white layers, and a bit of finely diced green citron between white and green layers.

While pudding chills, make a soft custard with the egg yolks, 1/3 cup sugar, a pinch of salt and 2-1/4 cups scalded milk. Follow directions in any standard cook book for mixing and cooking custard sauce. Chill thoroughly and blend in 1 teaspoon vanilla.

To serve, cut pudding in squares, top each square with about 3 tablespoons of chilled custard sauce, and garnish with a few shreds of blanched, toasted almonds.

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